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Heikki Topi

Al Harris

V Ramesh

Rolf Wigand

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## LAUNCHING A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF MSIS 2006

Heikki Topi  
Department of Computer Information Systems  
Bentley University  
htopi@bentley.edu

Al Harris  
Appalachian State University  
harrisal@appstate.edu

V. Ramesh  
Indiana University  
venkat@indiana.edu

Rolf Wigand  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
rtwigand@ualr.edu

### Abstract:

This panel discussion will provide the audience members with an opportunity to get a status update on the process of reviewing and revising MSIS 2006, the most recent graduate model curriculum in IS, and participate actively in this effort at an early stage. The panel consists of the members of the preliminary review task force that recently evaluated the current status of MSIS 2006 and recommended to AIS and ACM that a comprehensive review and revision process be launched. The panel will briefly summarize the conceptual arguments that have been made recently in support of a MSIS 2006 revision, discuss the results of the preliminary task force's data collection and analysis, update the audience on the status of and future plans for the MSIS 2006 revision process, and create a conversation forum for soliciting participants' feedback. The focal purpose of this panel is to seek ideas and suggestions from participants.

**Keywords:** master's curriculum in IS, curriculum recommendations, IS education

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recent panel presentations at AMCIS 2010 [Topi et al., 2010] and AIS SIG-ED 2011 [Topi et al., 2011a] and a follow-up journal article [Topi et al., 2011b] have discussed the need for a review of MSIS 2006 [Gorgone et al., 2006], the latest master's level curriculum recommendation in information systems (IS). Based on these conversations and further work on the topic, the AIS Council and ACM Education Board decided in Fall 2012 to establish a joint task force charged to study the need for and feasibility of revising MSIS 2006. This task force, consisting of Al Harris (representing AIS), V. Ramesh (AIS), Heikki Topi (ACM), and Rolf Wigand (ACM), has recommended that AIS and ACM form a new, larger joint task force with the charge of comprehensively reviewing and revising MSIS 2006. This panel will report on the work of the preliminary task force, give an update of the status of the MSIS 2006 review and revision process, and provide an opportunity for a discussion among all participants.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC

As reported in [Topi et al, 2000], [Topi et al. 2011a], and [Topi et al. 2011b], recent conversations among IS academics interested in developing master's level education in Information Systems further have identified multiple reasons why the IS community and its key professional societies should not only consider revising the master's level curriculum recommendation in Information Systems. They should also carefully analyze the positioning of master's programs in IS compared

with programs in various subareas of informatics, information science, software engineering and other areas of computing.

A four-member task force established by the ACM Education Board and AIS Council in Fall 2012 started its work with a face-to-face meeting at ICIS 2012 and continued throughout the present. It collected data with four different approaches: 1) a survey sent to about 100 MSIS (and corresponding) program directors in North America; 2) an open call for feedback on AISWorld; 3) a review of 26 leading North American master's programs in IS leading to a comparison between these programs and MSIS 2006; and 4) a similar review of 12 non-US master's programs in IS. Based on the results of these efforts and the conceptual work that had taken place earlier, the task force concluded that there are sufficient reasons to recommend launching a comprehensive revision of MSIS 2006 to take place in 2014-2016.

The key findings from the preliminary review task force's data collection processes were as follows:

- Going forward, it is essential that we will determine the best possible mechanisms for encouraging participation.
- An overwhelming majority (90+%) of respondents both in the program director survey and the open feedback survey indicated that a revision of MSIS 2006 is needed.
- A significant majority of those program directors that responded to the survey had found MSIS 2006 useful for their local curriculum development efforts.
- The respondents see a continuing need to include data management, project management, systems analysis & design, and business process modeling in the core of the master's program.
- Both survey responses and analyses of the curricula suggested that cloud computing and virtualization, data/business analytics (including big data/data science) and data/information security are topic areas that will grow in importance for the master's programs.
- Career tracks and other mechanisms that allow for local adaptations are essential components of a curriculum revision.
- The existing master's programs vary significantly in terms of both the overall curriculum structure and the key content elements. The only commonly shared elements are data management, and systems analysis and design.
- A master's thesis is a very common requirement outside the U.S. but virtually non-existent in the U.S. In general, the non-U.S. programs varied even more than the U.S. ones did.

The panel will review the findings of the preliminary review task force's data collection efforts and discuss the conclusions that the task force drew based on the data.

The most important purpose of the panel is, however, to inform the core IS education community about the status of the MSIS 2006 review and revision process and give the participants an opportunity to join the conversation regarding the direction the process should take, including questions such as:

- What are the best mechanisms to achieve the highest possible level of participation by interested and motivated members of the IS community?
- Which stakeholder groups should be heard of in the process, understanding that the participants might vary depending on the stage of the process?
- Specifically, how does the process best engage corporate stakeholders?
- How could the process best be used to define and strengthen the shared identity of Master's programs in IS?
- What are the most important areas requiring attention in the review process?

### III. STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION

The proposed panel will first review the background of master's level model curricula and summarize the conversation that has taken place since AMCIS 2010, particularly paying attention to the conceptual justifications for the need to revise MSIS 2006 and common findings from programs exemplars. The panel will then present the results of the various data collection approaches used by the preliminary review task force in 2012-13 and discuss the analysis of the results by this task force. A brief review of the status of the revision process will follow. After setting the stage with these introductions, the panel will move to the second, highly interactive stage in which the panelists and the members of the audience will participate in a moderated conversation regarding the key questions related to the MSIS revision process outlined above in Section II.

### IV. PANEL PARTICIPANTS

**Heikki Topi** (Moderator) is Professor of Computer Information Systems at Bentley University. His teaching interests cover a range of topics including advanced systems analysis and design, systems modeling, and data management. His current research focuses on human factors and usability issues in enterprise systems, information search and data management and the effects of time availability on human-computer interaction. His research has been published in journals such as *European Journal of Information Systems*, *JASIST*, *Information Processing & Management*, *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, *Journal of Database Management*, *Small Group Research*, *Communications of the AIS*, and others. He is co-author of two database management textbooks, *Modern Database Management* and *Essentials of Database Management*, with Jeff Hoffer and V. Ramesh. He has been actively involved in national computing curriculum development and evaluation efforts (including IS 2002, CC2005 Overview Report, and as co-chair of the IS 2010 curriculum revision project). He is a member of the ACM Education Board and the Board of CSAB. He will bring to the panel his in-depth expertise in model curriculum development, broad understanding of computing education, and experience in academic administration.

**Albert L. Harris** is a Professor in the Department of Computer Information Systems at Appalachian State University. Dr. Harris received his Ph.D. in Management Information Systems (MIS) from Georgia State University, his M.S. in Systems Management from the George Washington University, and his B.S. in Quantitative Business Analysis from Indiana University. He teaches a variety of graduate and undergraduate classes in information technology (IT)/information systems (IS). His research interests include IS education and IT ethics. He co-edited a book titled *Managing Global Information Technology: Strategies and Challenges* and has published 9 book chapters and over 80 refereed scholarly articles in academic journals, and conference proceedings. Dr. Harris was Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Information Systems Education* for over 10 years and is now its Editor Emeritus. He was a Fulbright Scholar to the University of Évora in Portugal (2006), an Exchange professor to the University of Angers, France (2008-09), an Exchange Professor to Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland (2011), and a Visiting Professor at Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences in Dornbirn, Austria (2007-2010). He is a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), a Certified Computer Professional (CCP), and a Certified Management Consultant (CMC). Dr. Harris is currently Secretary of the AIS SIGED.

**V. Ramesh** is an Associate Professor of Information Systems and Lawrence D. Glaubinger Professor of Business Administration at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business. He is also Chair of the Undergraduate Program and former Chair of the MS in Information Systems (MSIS) program. As Chair of the MSIS program, he successfully grew the program from 14 students in 2002 to more than 130 entering students in fall 2013. He has published over 25 papers in leading journals, such as *Information Systems Research*, *MIS Quarterly*, *ACM Transactions on Information Systems*, *Communications of the ACM*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Information Systems* and *IEEE Expert*, in addition to edited books and publications in conference proceedings. Ramesh is also the co-author on one of the leading database books on the market,

*Modern Database Management 11e*, along with Jeff Hoffer and Heikki Topi. In addition to his university teaching and research, Ramesh is actively involved in several service activities. He is an active participant in both the ISACA and the IT Service Management Forum (itSMF) communities, which forms one of the basis of expertise that he will be contributing to the panel. This will be in addition to his success as long-term MSIS program chair and his innovative thinking related to the Master's programs in IS.

**Rolf Wigand** is the Maulden-Entergy Chair and Distinguished Professor of Information Science and Business Information Systems at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He is the past director of the Graduate Program in Information Management at Syracuse University. His colleagues and Wigand grew this program from 35 students in 1991 to over 100 in 2002. Most recent and current NSF-funded research has focused on the global impact of electronic commerce in ten nations, the impact of electronic commerce on the real estate industry, the software standards development in the mortgage, automotive parts supply and RFID in the retail industries, the longitudinal development of trust and leadership in virtual organizations, the analysis of social networks in disaster situations as well as the tracking and analysis of how sentiments lead to collective action on blogs and social media using novel and innovative methodology. His current NSF research grants (2007-2014) continue with standards development research in the mortgage, retail and automotive supply industries; the analysis of virtual organizations, networks in disaster settings as well as the analysis of online blogs and social media. He holds or has held editorial positions with numerous journals in our field. His research has appeared in such journals as *MIS Quarterly*, *Journal of MIS*, *Sloan Management Review*, *Journal of Information Technology*, *Journal of Communication*, *Electronic Markets: The International Journal*, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *International Journal of Information Technology & Decision Making*, *Knowledge Management: Research & Practice*, *International Journal of Management*, *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *European Journal of Information Systems*. He is an editorial board and review board member of almost 30 journals, book series and yearbooks. Wigand is the author of six books and over 150 articles, book chapters, and monographs. His book, *Information, Organization and Management: Expanding Markets and Corporate Boundaries* (with A. Picot and R. Reichwald), John Wiley & Sons, was listed among the "75 Best Management Books of All Time" in the *Handelsblatt Management Bibliothek*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt and New York. He was an invited member to the Joint ACM/AIS Task Force for the Master's Curriculum in Information Systems, i.e. MSIS 2000 and MSIS 2006.

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